



## DISCLOSURE AUSTRALIA The Journey So Far

by Debbie Payne © 2004

**D**uring the course of this article I am going to try to give you a glimpse through a very small window into the Australian Government's files on UFOs. What has to be understood is that the information beyond this window is so extensive that it would be impossible for me to present even a fraction of what has been discovered, let alone explain it to you.

The hardest part in writing this paper was deciding on *which* files to discuss, so I tended to focus more on the ones that stood out for various reasons. What I would like to suggest is that you log on to the National Archives of Australia (NAA) website (<http://www.naa.gov.au>) and view these files, just as AURA—the Australian UFO Research Association—has done.

### The Australian Disclosure

The *Collins Dictionary* defines "disclosure" as "a revelation" and "to disclose" as "to make known, to allow to be seen". Over the last four or five years Australian UFO researchers, like their counterparts overseas, have been discussing and debating the concept of "disclosure". Many of you no doubt will be familiar with the US Disclosure Project headed up by Dr Steven Greer and the enormous amount of work his team has done in this direction.

But the substance of this article isn't to weigh up the absolute arguments for and against the existence of UFOs; it's to present enough viable evidence in the form of raw data to challenge the belief systems of those who are uninformed or sceptical. It's not about the analysis of what we have found so far because once we have collated enough data from the files we've had released, then the analysis will be the focus of our future efforts. We estimate this whole process could take a couple of years. But by following this methodical procedure, I think that it will strengthen the resolve of established and committed researchers that their work is both viable and important to the understanding of the overall phenomenon. Everyone in some way contributes a piece to the jigsaw puzzle and the picture is becoming clearer.

What we have done during the first stages of the Australian Disclosure Project is to find out exactly how many records exist in the Australian Government sector about UFOs and to what extent the government pursued, and indeed still pursues, this issue.

These pages can now be viewed publicly by anyone and mulled over, dissected, followed up, researched and individual conclusions reached. We are showing you what's there. It's up to you to decide what to do with the information. However, whatever your conclusions, these records certainly give you a starting point for all kinds of research into this subject.

Our search began about a year ago with our own local knowledge and the on-line records of the National Archives of Australia. Currently the on-line record search will only give access to around 10% of what is registered with the Archives, but at least it was a place for us to start. At one stage we punched in "Reports on Flying Saucers"; to our surprise, this search term, unlike searches we did on the term "UFO", produced around 20 files. In these 20 files there were around 5,000 pages of information, but we had no idea about what they contained or to what extent the government had documented them. I can only tell you we were more than encouraged after viewing the first few documents. Imagine what it will be like when the remaining 90 per cent can be accessed.

### Who kept UFO files?

You will see from the list below that there were numerous resource channels open to us, including:

- RAAF (Royal Australian Air Force);
- CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific & Industrial Research Organisation);
- Department of External Affairs, including Department of Territories;
- RAN (Royal Australian Navy);
- Department of Supply (a federal department, now defunct), at Woomera;
- DSTO (Defence Science and Technology Organisation) at Edinburgh Air Force Base, which was formerly the

Long Range Weapons Research Establishment (WRE);

- Bureau of Meteorology;
- Department of Civil Aviation;
- "The Committee".

More recently, under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act we obtained over 600 pages of information, but this figure is due to increase very shortly by a further 2,300 pages because the RAAF has kindly granted us access to another 38 files—enigmatic files, to say the least. These 38 files were suspiciously unavailable the first time we asked; then we were told they had been destroyed. On our last request, these files were located and made available because this time we went through a different channel. So sometimes it all depends on whom you speak to.

Currently all these files from the departments previously mentioned total some 12,000-odd pages and have cost AURA over A\$1,800 to date to obtain.

Unfortunately I can only present a few reports in any detail due to our limited space, so at least you will get to know something about the content of these files and the extent of their information. I have tried to be as diverse in subject matter as I can with my chosen examples, just to demonstrate the intriguing number of very different cases recorded in these files. Some may be familiar to you as famous Australian cases, and others you won't have heard of. I want you to see that the Australian Government *did* keep detailed files on our most famous cases (see table 1).

Rather than have other researchers laboriously go through every one of the thousands of pages at the Archives looking for something in particular, we wrote brief notes on the content of every page in every file. By doing this, anyone can go to these file summaries and scan through them to find what they're looking for, like an index—keeping in mind, of course, that the NAA files were obtained under the 30-year rule, which makes 1973 the most current record we are able to access at this present time.

But I tell you that when 1st January clicked over this year, another 14 files appeared on our standard search. However, files released under the FOI Act can be a lot more recent, so don't think we are only limited to files prior to 1974; we're not.

We have also conducted register searches at our local National Archives Office in Adelaide, something we will endeavour to

carry out at various other Archives offices around the country.

All the files you see as digital copies online can be viewed on your personal computers in the luxury of your own homes. These records are currently held at the head office of the National Archives in Canberra.

And contrary to conjecture from some who are very quick to imply we won't find anything new in our recently released government files, we have uncovered hundreds of pages of documents that have never seen the light of day, so statements of that nature are completely without substance.

What do we know now that we didn't know a year ago? In a word, plenty! We know that Australia—especially the RAAF and the Long Range Weapons Research Establishment at Woomera—was deeply involved with other governments and various intelligence organisations, including NASA, in joint space programs and the sharing of information relating to anything space based. So my first file has something to do with international co-operation and interest in this subject.

### What was Project Moondust?

In 1953 the USAF 4602nd Air Intelligence Service Squadron was created. Its purpose was to recover downed enemy aircraft during the Korean War. In 1957 it was expanded to recover objects and debris from space vehicles that had survived re-entry from space to Earth, and in 1961, according to a United States Air Force memo, it included UFOs.

While researching the topic of Project

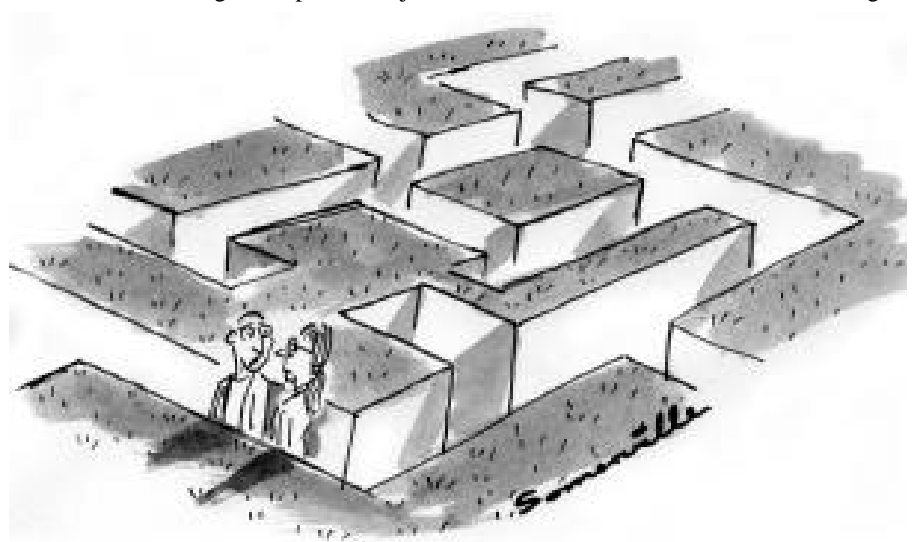
*Moondust* on the Internet, I came across a 42-page file released under the USA Freedom of Information Act which clearly demonstrates a link between UFOs, the United Nations and Project *Moondust*.

On the first page of these documents, the subject header simply reads "Project Moondust", and dates from November 1973. It concerns the recovery of what may have been Soviet satellite debris. However, also included in this 42-page package are documents on a 1978 discussion concerning the potential of having the United Nations undertake UFO investigations, report on UFO sightings and retrieve crashed objects from different countries. It also mentions the recovery of a spherical object (said to have landed smoothly) in Buenos Aires in 1984.

So *Moondust* was very much a global project. But a singular statement made by the Prime Minister of Grenada and recounted by the American delegate to the United Nations leaps out at you on page 9 and reads as follows:

*...the recent report of the abduction of a Cessna aircraft in Australia seemed to him to be a compelling reason for the United Nations to "come alive to its responsibilities and take a serious look at the UFO phenomenon, to which Planet Earth has been conspicuously exposed since 1947".*

Two words immediately caught my attention in this phrase: the word "abduction", which was used to describe the disappearance on 21 October 1978 of Frederick Valentich—not crashed, lost or missing at



*"I don't know who's responsible for this crop circle, but I bet they have a degree in Behavioural Psychology."*

# THE TWILIGHT ZONE

sea, but abducted; and, of course, the reference to 1947, which we all come across during the course of our research. It seems to be a definitive time in ufology. We have pre-1947 and post-1947 as a way to categorise the modern era of sightings.

The next page of the file states that 133 countries had already provided reports regarding UFOs for the express purpose of setting up a UN-sponsored committee to study the phenomenon. Jacques Vallee, Stanton Friedman and J. Allen Hynek were also present at this meeting.

However, the official reason for Project *Moondust* was to retrieve downed space vehicles, and what we wanted to know was whether or not Australia participated in this project. I am certain the answer is, "Yes, we did".

## Crash retrieval team

The Department of Supply file no. SA 5644/2/1 contains a 1962 memo from the Controller of WRE to the Superintendent at Woomera. In it, he states that "the United States Embassy" sought WRE's assistance to obtain information about sightings or downed fragments of space vehicles.

This location and recovery of fragments was exactly the role of the US Air Force's Project *Moondust*, and the request to Australia was made a year after the project commenced in full force to include UFOs. In our reading of the Supply file, there is never actually a mention of the words

"Project *Moondust*". However, as it was a classified US project, perhaps this is not surprising. Under this banner the Australian Government located and retrieved several items of interest, which we have listed on our website.

It also means that the military had in place a "quick response unit". In his 1996 document, "UFOs *Sub Rosa* Down Under – The Australian Military & Government Role in the UFO Controversy", Bill Chalker writes:

*It appears JIO [Joint Intelligence Organisation] have a "rapid intervention" capability, as they have been able to instigate prompt widespread ground searches in suspected "hardware" crashes. They do this through "special access" channels. This operation may be similar to the US activity operating under the code name Project "Moondust".*

So I think it's fair to say that Australia did participate in Project *Moondust*, and did have and still has a "rapid intervention" team connected to the Department of Defence.

The reason I am so confident that the rapid intervention team exists is partly due to a number of conversations a member of our AURA team had with a Woomera resident who is retired from the military. He claims to have been a member of this retrieval team, and at the moment we are trying to corroborate his story.

From the many retrievals listed, I find one in particular rather interesting. This one was near Inkerman in Queensland in March 1968 and was given to the US Embassy in Australia immediately and without analysis [RAAF file J63/25 5/40/AIR PART 1]. It makes you wonder what was in those diplomatic pouches!

## Is Woomera Area 52?

The next find I'd like to discuss is based on a couple of files from the Department of Supply at Woomera on sightings that occurred between 1952 and 1954. There were literally hundreds of sightings over the years at this highly restricted space facility. In fact, the base servicemen even had their own UFO club, called STARS (Scientific Technical Astronomical Research Society), which they were permitted to set up but with very stringent conditions including being prohibited from publishing any of their UFO reports.

In order for you to understand the significance of the Woomera space facility, its participation in projects on a global scale and the dates I have chosen, here are a few facts and figures.

- **1947** – Long Range Weapons Establishment formed between the UK and Australia
- **1949** – First missile launched from Woomera Rocket Range;
- **1957** – First *Skylark* rocket launched;
- **1958** – First *Black Night* rocket launched;
- **1959** – The first deep-space tracking station to be established outside the United States is established by NASA at Woomera;
- **1962** – Countries from Europe together with Australia formed the European Launcher Development Organisation (ELDO), a collaboration which launched the *Europa* series of rockets;
- **1964** – First *Europa* rocket launched (a modified *Blue Streak* rocket);
- **1966** – First *Europa* rocket with dummy stages launched;
- **1967** – Australia's very own satellite, WRESAT (Weapons Research Establishment Satellite) launched, making Australia only the fourth country in the world to launch its own satellite from its own territory.

The list of launches and research and development programs goes on, but we'll leave this for now.



"Our next big mission for 2008 is to send a fully equipped probe Washington to search for signs of intelligent life."

The Department of Defence lists Woomera's *possible* activities as follows:

- Air-to-air combat training;
- Bombing camps;
- Remote area operations;
- Airborne and ground testing of long-range weapons systems;
- Rocket testing (including Scramjet technology);
- Space vehicle launch and recovery, including reusable rockets;
- Parachute drops;
- Hot and dry equipment trials;
- Because electromagnetic interference is extremely low, the area permits EMI/EMC testing (electromagnetic interference and compatibility between guidance systems and aircraft electronic equipment, both on the ground and in the air).

Today, Woomera still operates a deep-space tracking station. It has what they call "ears in space", listening to noises from space, and it monitors equipment on satellites in orbit. Woomera has R&D connections with NASA, the European Space Agency, Kistler Aerospace, BAE (British Aerospace) Systems, the Japanese *Cangaroo* Project and other not-so-public projects—like research into nanotechnology and breaking the Mach 7 barrier (two years before the Americans, who announced they had done so in March 2004) with its work on Scramjet technology. Incidentally, Woomera does have an area designated as Area 52a Evetts Field. It was one of the sites proposed for the National Radioactive Waste Repository and probably still is.

The Woomera Prohibited Area, as it is now known, is the size of England and covers 127,000 square kilometres. You can hide a lot of activity in a remote desert compound the size of a small country. But in the early 1950s, Woomera was *a lot bigger*. It covered 270,000 square kilometres. It was also the subject of some very interesting events.

### Military officers witness UFO

On the night of Saturday 27 October 1952, at approximately 8.00 pm, five persons witnessed a cigar-shaped object fly on a straight and horizontal trajectory, 40 to 45 degrees above the horizon from the witnesses' right-hand side to their left. Four of the witnesses were at the Woomera open-air

theatre and were seated together: Warrant Officer H., Warrant Officer W., J. A. (chief baker at the Department of Supply) and Sergeant P.

In his report, Sergeant P. makes several observations, and considering he was an officer at Woomera he would have observed test flights and been familiar with rockets and jets. He saw that the cigar-shaped object had two portholes and interior lighting. (Now why would an unmanned rocket need portholes and interior lighting?) It travelled faster than any jet aircraft he'd ever seen. And in his statement he says he was not prepared to say whether this thing was an *Earthly* object. W. states it was not a falling star, and was faster than any air-

**Woomera Prohibited Area is now the size of England and covers 127,000 square kilometres. In the early 1950s, Woomera covered 270,000 square kilometres.**

craft he'd ever seen. H. comments that he heard no noise, and that it was definitely something other than anything from the heavens, meaning a comet or shooting star. The other witness was the wife of a serviceman and gives the same description from another location in Woomera township.

The interesting part is where the Chief Security Officer forwards all the reports from the investigator to the State Security Office in Adelaide under the title "Flying Saucer Observed Over Woomera". In a brief covering letter he states that the witnesses are all reliable and sober and that a cigar-shaped object, "whether man made or not", was observed. A copy is then on-forwarded to the Deputy Chief Security Officer in Melbourne. A paper trail has begun.

It then transpires that the *Advertiser* newspaper also published reports of the same object, sighted by different witnesses in other parts of the state. (Any news clippings regarding flying saucers were cut out and retained by the various defence forces. We found a lot of them.)

And so a file is now born—RSO 52/618—and becomes part of a greater file.

### Snow clouds don't do 90° turns

This next report from Woomera is from a radar officer who was on duty at the time of this event. I have the original Defence Department tracking map to back up these statements:

*At 1.45 pm while searching for a Mustang on G1, a target was locked onto in the Shell Lagoon Area. On looking through the telescope on the radar dish, no target could be seen. The signal-to-noise ratio was at least 5 to 1, which is similar to that obtained from a large aircraft. Between 1.45 and 2.00 pm the target came to within a mile distant, and still could not be seen. At 2.05 pm I decided to plot the course of the target. At times during the movement of the target, SMALLER targets seemed to detach themselves from the main target and drift away.*

There are numerous contradictions surrounding this event. The official explanation, by the way, turned out to be a snow cloud. However, the officials shot themselves in the foot on that one. The report is titled "Flying Saucer Phenomenon over Range G1"—not an anomalous snow cloud! The file summary on the weather conditions is as follows, and I did check these conditions independently:

*Fine, high cloud @ 25,000 feet, warm temperature, 84 degrees Fahrenheit [27 degrees C]. Strong, northerly wind (25–30 mph), which blew from the inland desert.*

And this is where it gets strange (my emphasis in bold):

*In view of the foregoing weather report and the absence of any visual sighting, the signals **probably** came from a cloud.*

In a report put together two weeks later, after other radar operators were questioned, the object is referred to as the "invisible phenomenon"—and because no object was visible, there was nothing of security interest. (So if you can see it, it can't be all bad.) But in the very same report, one paragraph above this one, it reads (my emphasis in bold):

*...the fact that small portions were breaking away tends to show that whatever it was on radar was*

# THE TWILIGHT ZONE

registering the target very efficiently on something *other than* ordinary snow.

So there goes the snow theory. Doesn't make sense, does it?

In the second paragraph on the same piece of paper it reads:

*...the phenomenon was locked to his radar beam for a period of at least 24 minutes which in NO WAY can be compared with Flying Saucer phenomenon of previous reports.*

So I take it from that comment that they knew pretty much how a flying saucer behaved!

## UFO filmed during rocket launch

My next slide shows some correspondence regarding the sighting of a UFO filmed during a *Skylark* rocket test back in April 1967. We are yet to locate that film. Some of the transcript reads as follows:

*I spoke to you some weeks ago about a report of UFO sightings during a Skylark launch...have you had the films examined?*

The superintendent was most upset that the report he requested had not found its way to his desk. (We encountered many significant handwritten notes on the files we examined.)

## From 400 mph to Mach 5 – 3,600 mph – in just 10 seconds!

In May 1954, a dark grey circular disc was observed by a Woomera radar operator through binoculars, pacing a *Canberra* bomber directly above it. The cruising

speed of a *Canberra* bomber was around 400 mph. The disc flew up to the *Canberra*, paused over the top of it, remained stationary (seemingly) above the bomber, then flew away at great speed. Radar operators who took the bearing on the target timed it between two points and realised that this object was doing *in excess of 3,600 miles per hour*, or Mach 5, and yet it appeared to be stationary seconds beforehand. The radar operator who witnessed the event is quoted as saying:

*...during this time I found it very hard to believe what I was seeing, so I shut my eyes and looked again, and it was still stationary over the Canberra.*

What makes this guy so believable is that he worked for Vickers–Armstrong. They made aircraft. He knew what he was looking at.

Mach 1 was officially reached in October 1947 (there's that date again) by Chuck Yeager (*The Right Stuff*) in a Bell X-1 aircraft. Mach 2 was reached in December 1953, and Mach 3 in September 1956. It took a further five years to achieve Mach 4 in March 1961, and shortly after that Mach 5 (3,603 mph) was achieved on 23 June 1961—seven years after *something else* did it at Woomera. Mach 6 was reached on 9 November 1961. It then took us 43 years, officially, to get from Mach 6 to Mach 7 in March 2004, although according to my sources Woomera achieved Mach 7 two years ago.

But what's most interesting about this case (and you really need to get your head around this) is that the object went from about 400 mph to 3,600 mph in just 10 seconds! In 1954!

## Hot Spots, Sightings at Milne Bay, Papua New Guinea

One of the most intriguing things I found throughout my Disclosure journey refers to a series of reports coming out of Papua New Guinea, in particular the Milne Bay area. Considering the number of files I've scanned, this area

was by far the most active that I'd come across, next to Woomera.

Milne Bay is on the easternmost tip of Papua New Guinea, bordered by the Solomon Sea above and the Coral Sea below. The surrounding islands and seas were rife with reports of all kinds of weird and wonderful sightings. I believe there may well be an underwater base in this area, because of the number of sightings over such a great period of time and also because the survey map indicates that the ocean is very deep in this area. The seabeds around these islands are littered with underwater caverns.

## What was seen but wasn't on the radar at Santa Cruz?

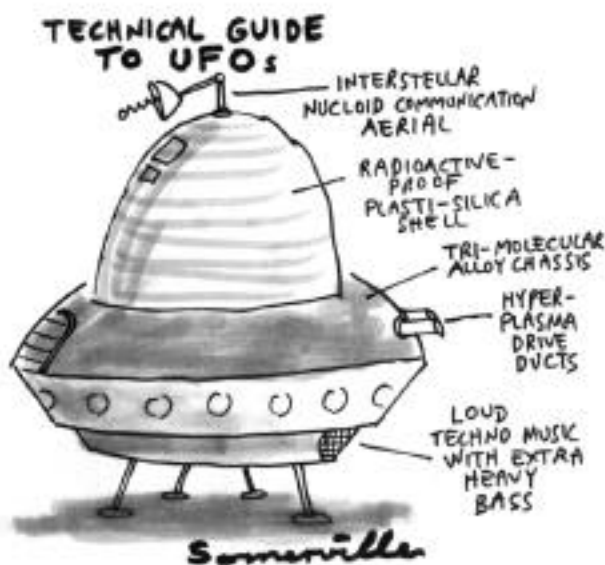
The area of the Santa Cruz Islands, bordering the Coral Sea near Vanuatu, is the subject of my next report. HMAS *Anzac* reported that at 5.45 pm on Thursday 5 May 1966, when in position near the Santa Cruz Islands, four unidentified flying objects were sighted at about 20 degrees above the horizon by the navigating officer and by several other officers who were not on the bridge at the time.

These objects were quite distinct and appeared closely grouped, the leading object glowing red and the three trailing objects green in colour and forming an equilateral triangle with its apex towards the leading object. They left trails of colour in their wakes but these did not last. The trails were approximately six times the length of the objects. After the objects had disappeared behind cloud ahead of the ship, they reappeared one more time before disappearing once again into cloud cover. The approximate time in sight was not more than 25 seconds, and the objects were travelling at a very high speed.

No radar contacts were detected at the time—although there is a handwritten notation on this report to re-check all radar imaging for that day. There are two forwarding reports and there's another note clearly stating that this report should "not find its way to the Australian UFO file". It is signed by the Director of Naval Intelligence.

## U2 spyplane over Tasmania!

Over the years, there have been a number of occasions when UFO researchers have run into UFO sightings generated by observations of "secret" aircraft—flying triangles being a perfect example.



Are they or aren't they ours? To the best of our knowledge, no Australian researcher or group has suggested that "secret aircraft" have been the cause of any Australian UFO reports.

It was therefore with surprise that we came across the following report when reviewing an RAAF UFO file.

A Department of Agriculture inspector reported a UFO sighting to the RAAF in May 1961. Following is a reconstruction of the incident, based on the information located in a digital copy of file series A703:

At 8.35 am on 25 May 1961, children were playing in the backyard of a house in Devonport, Tasmania. The children saw something in the sky which caused them to get a "Mr Y." out of the house. This male witness reported seeing one definite object in the sky. It was "silvery but not reflective" and was "shaped like a thermometer or a pencil without a point". No detailed structure was noted, and there was no sound associated with the sighting. The object's speed was stated as "slow". It was seen to the north-northwest of Devonport, travelling in a straight line.

Question 26 on the RAAF Report Form, which was filled in by the RAAF interviewer, asks for the "Location of any air traffic in the vicinity at the time of sighting". Typed here are the words, "U2 aircraft over Great Lake at approximately 8.15 am travelling in a northerly direction, leaving a distinct vapour trail".

What were we doing with a U2 spyplane flying over Tasmania in 1961?

## The research journey

During the course of our research, AURA has looked at hundreds of report forms, sketches, photographs and records on so many different types of UFOs it's staggering. And we haven't even finished 10 per cent of what could be released.

I have only recounted a few sightings from the hundreds if not thousands of sightings on record. It would be almost impossible to present them all to you, so that's why we are putting all this information on CDs. Under Crown copyright, I can only show 10 per cent of any given file with names and details on them "for research purposes", so that's why we want anyone with an interest in this subject to obtain a copy of the CDs to see for themselves what a goldmine of information is now on record.

Some of the most interesting reports are from air bases in all States, particularly Pearce in Western Australia, Woomera in South Australia, and Williams at Laverton in Victoria. There are reports from TAA and QANTAS pilots. There are hundreds of individual sighting reports, fully documented, from every part of Australia, including from personnel on oil platforms, cargo ships and naval vessels as well as from police officers and the general public. The list is huge.

I guess we will still plod through the enormous amount of information at the NAA, because in order for you to look at the files on their web page you have to request each file to be examined and made available.

**There are hundreds of individual sighting reports, fully documented, from every part of Australia, including from pilots, personnel on oil platforms, cargo ships and naval vessels as well as from police officers and the general public.**

We have a master list of around 110 possibly relevant files. The RAAF has files on UFOs from 1984 to 1994, so we need to take a look at these.

The aim is in two or three years' time to use our solid material to become politically active in seeking other information from the Australian Government and then to lobby the government to declare openly what their knowledge is on the topic of UFOs.

## The mysterious "Committee"

In all the files I reviewed, there were only two references that I came across to "the Committee". Both were from very-high-ranking military personnel.

I believe the Committee was attached originally to the Joint Intelligence Organisation and had firm ties to the Chiefs of Naval and Air Force Intelligence.

It was set up to review certain interesting cases that were found to be either inconclusive or inexplicable in terms of "Earthly Origin". Following is an extract from a letter from the Director of Naval Intelligence:

2. *It is advised that the reports have*

*been passed to the Committee which has been set up to consider such reports. The Committee desires to express its thanks for such a well-authenticated sighting.*

This Committee actually seems rather pleased to get such a well-documented and authenticated report, obviously because this is what they were there for. The report in question is on the Nowra Incident.

## So what does the Government really know about UFOs?

Not as much as they could, because they seem to do very little analysis on the reports they gather, but I'm only surmising this. I'm quite sure that if they had a piece of alien bumper bar, they wouldn't have documented it in the Archives for us to look at.

I think they know everything they need to know for now, and you can bet they have files that will never see the light of day. But one thing's for sure: they would have someone, somewhere, who knows a damned sight more than we do.

## About the Author:

Debbie Payne, based in Adelaide, South Australia, has worked as a technical adviser in the construction industry for the last 20 years. Until she had her first UFO sighting at close range about 10 years ago, she was a sceptic.

From 1994 to 2002, Debbie was involved with Colin Norris's Australian International UFO and Flying Saucer Research Organisation, which has been meeting since 1952. Since March 2002 she's been participating in Lloyd Pye's Starchild Project, and in mid-2002, together with ufologist Keith Basterfield, she formed an eight-member, self-funded research group, the Australian UFO Research Association (AURA).

This article is based on Debbie Payne's presentation at the Australian National UFO Conference in June 2004. The full text can be found at the webpage <http://disclosure.freewebsite.org/Article%20text%202022.6.04.htm>.

Debbie Payne can be contacted at the Australian UFO Research Association, PO Box 786, North Adelaide, SA 5006, Australia; telephone 0413 800 143 (mobile; Australia only), email [disclosureaustralia@yahoo.com.au](mailto:disclosureaustralia@yahoo.com.au), website <http://www.disclosure.freewebsite.org>.